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Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [USDA Service Centers Closed For President's Day Federal Holiday](#)
- [ARC and PLC Program Deadlines Fast Approaching](#)
- [Montana FSA Advanced ARC-PLC, NAP, LIP, LFP and ELAP Webinar Recordings Now Available](#)
- [Schedule of Upcoming Local FSA Farm Bill Meetings](#)
- [The Importance of Good Calving Records for the Livestock Indemnity Program](#)
- [Important FSA Dates to Remember](#)
- [Montana NRCS Announces Conservation Initiatives for 2015 – Feb. 20th Deadline to Apply](#)

Montana FSA: February 2015 eNewsletter

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[Online Directory of FSA](#)

ARC and PLC Program Deadlines Fast Approaching

Key FSA dates for farm owners and producers regarding the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) are quickly approaching. The new programs are designed to help producers better manage risk for price losses or revenue losses.

For the first time in years farmers can update program payment yields that will help them better select protections offered by the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. The new programs, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, are cornerstones of the commodity farm safety, offering farmers protection when market forces cause substantial drops in crop prices and revenues. The Farm Bill provided landowners with the option of updating their farm program payment yields. This is the first time that many producers have been able to update yields since 1986. The deadline to update yields and/or reallocate base acres with FSA is Feb. 27th. If you miss the Feb. 27th deadline, your farm's current counter-cyclical yield and base acres will be

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Reasonable

Accommodations: People with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in FSA programs should contact the County Executive Director in the FSA Office in your area or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Alternatively, you may also contact Montana FSA Civil Rights Coordinator Jennifer Cole at (406) 587-6786 or jennifer.cole@mt.usda.gov.

used for ARC-PLC.

By March 31, producers must make a one-time election of either ARC or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years. If producers and owners with a share of the cropland on a farm do not make a unanimous election by March 31, the farm will be ineligible for any 2014 payments and all covered commodities on the farm will have a default PLC election valid from the 2015-2018 crop years. Election is not enrollment; producers must still enroll their farm annually to receive program benefits. The enrollment dates slated for Spring 2015 to Summer 2015 have not yet been announced.

Dates associated with ARC and PLC that farm owners and producers need to know:

- **February 27, 2015:** Deadline for land owners to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres with FSA.
- **March 31, 2015:** Deadline for producers make a one-time election of either ARC-County (ARC-CO), ARC-Individual (ARC-IC) or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- **Spring 2015 through summer 2015:** Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years. (*Exact Dates TBA*)
- **October 2015:** ARC or PLC payments for the 2014 crop year are issued, if triggered.

To learn more about which safety net options are most appropriate for specific farming operations, farmers can use new Web tools at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc, which can be accessed from the convenience of a home computer or a mobile device at any time.

ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES: For more information, visit MSU Extension's Farm Bill website at <http://www.montana.edu/farmbill>, FSA's national Farm Bill website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill>, Montana FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt and RMA's national Farm Bill website at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/news/currentissues/farmbill/>.

QUESTIONS: For more information, contact your local county FSA office.

Montana FSA Advanced ARC-PLC, NAP, LIP, LFP and ELAP Webinar Recordings Now Available

Did you miss the Farm Bill meetings held by FSA this fall and winter and do you want to learn more about the new programs and provisions? If so, three Webinar recordings from Montana FSA are now available to producers to access anytime from any computer. To participate, you need an Internet connection as well as a current version of Adobe Flashplayer loaded on your computer which can be accessed for free at: <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer>.

The February webinar features presentations on FSA's Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, new 2015 program changes to the Livestock Indemnity Program

(LIP), Livestock Forage Program (LFP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm Raised Fish Program (ELAP), and the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Program (NAP) Buy-Up Option.

February 2015 Webinars:

- **Advanced ARC PLC** Presentation by Amanda Lucas, State Program Specialist: <http://msuextensionconnect.org/p997a37zb49/>
- **Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** Presentation by Shelly Rolando, State Program Specialist: <http://msuextensionconnect.org/p33axnqtjed/>
- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** Presentation by Shelly Rolando, Chief State Program Specialist: <http://msuextensionconnect.org/p8mikw8et2h/>
- **MSU Extension:** The MSU Extension Presentation about the Farm Bill Decision Tools on ARC, PLC and NAP will be available in the next few weeks on the MSU Farm Bill page: <http://www.montana.edu/farbill/resources.html>

November 2014 FSA-MSU Webinars:

Additionally, webinar recordings from Nov. 11 remain available for public access:

- **ARC-PLC:** <http://msuextensionconnect.org/p7uv86syupi/>
- **MSU Extension Decision Tool Analysis:** <http://msuextensionconnect.org/p29vrzgisj8/>

All available recordings are accessible at: <http://www.montana.edu/farbill/resources.html>.

Schedule of Upcoming Local FSA Farm Bill Meetings

Producers are invited to attend any of the upcoming Farm Bill public informational meetings hosted by local FSA offices to learn about FSA programs. Additional meetings continue to be scheduled. For questions about a meeting in your area, contact your local FSA office.

Upcoming Local Meetings:

- **Feb. 19 at 1 to 3 p.m. in HAVRE** at the USDA Service Center (206 25th Ave. W) Topics are: ARC and PLC. *Pre-Registration Required. Contact the Havre FSA office at 406.265.6792, ext.2.
- **Feb. 23 at Noon to 4 p.m. in MANHATTAN** at the Gallatin Conservation District (120 South 5th St.). Topics are ARC and PLC. Computer Workshop is facilitated by Dr. George Haynes of MSU Extension. No RSVP Needed, Just Bring your FSA Base & Yield Records to the workshop or request a copy of your records from the Bozeman FSA office prior to the meeting.
- **March 4 at 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in MILES CITY** the Miles City USDA Service Center (3120 Valley Drive East). Topics are Livestock and NAP.
- **March 5 at 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in MILES CITY** the Miles City USDA Service Center (3120 Valley Drive East). Topics are Livestock and NAP.
- **March 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in CHINOOK** at the Blaine County Extension Triple E Room (400 Ohio, Courthouse Annex). This is an ARC-PLC workshop facilitated by Dr. George Haynes of MSU Extension. You do not need to RSVP but please bring copies of your FSA Base and Yield Documents or request a copy of your records from the Chinook FSA office prior to the workshop.

Reasonable Accommodations: Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to participate should contact Jennifer Cole, Montana FSA State Civil Rights Coordinator at 406.587.6786 and/or jennifer.cole@mt.usda.gov or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Please submit your request by two business days prior to the meeting. You may also contact the local FSA County

Executive Director.

The Importance of Good Calving Records for the Livestock Indemnity Program

As Montana producers start calving, we want to stress the importance of keeping excellent calving records. It is very important to keep a calving book with the date the calf was born, ear tag number and any important data about the calf. Additionally, if you lose a calf, clear documentation of the date the loss occurred and the reason for the loss is very important! If a death loss is attributed to weather, document the weather conditions on the date the animal died. Contact the FSA Office within 30 days of the loss. You may report the notice of loss via phone call, fax, email or in person at your FSA office. Take pictures of the dead livestock with the ear tag visible and make certain that the date stamp is turned on your camera. You can also pay a measurement service with FSA for us to come out and document the death loss.

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill) authorized the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) to provide benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, extreme temperatures, disease, wildfires, or due to attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law, including wolves and avian predators.

LIP payments are equal to 75 percent of the market value of the applicable livestock, as determined by the CCC, for the specific livestock category.

A LIP factsheet can be found at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/lip_long_fact_sht.pdf. Please contact your FSA office with any questions.

Important FSA Dates to Remember

- **Feb. 27:** Deadline for Land Owners to Update Yield History and/or Reallocate Base Acres
- **March 16:** Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Sales Closing Date for 2015 Spring Seeded Crops
- **March 31:** Deadline for Producers to Make a One-time Election of Either ARC or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 Crop Years
- **March 31:** Final Loan/LDP Availability Dates for Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Sesame seed and Wheat

Montana NRCS Announces Conservation Initiatives for 2015 – Feb. 20th Deadline to Apply

Four national initiatives are being offered in Montana through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): On-Farm Energy, Organic, Seasonal High Tunnel, and Prairie Pothole Wetland and Grassland Retention.

While the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) accepts applications for EQIP on a continuous basis, NRCS has set a deadline of **Feb. 20, 2015**, to apply for 2015 initiatives funding.

Below is an overview of each initiative:

- **National On-Farm Energy Initiative (NOFEI):** NOFEI has two components. In the first component, agricultural producers work with an NRCS-approved Technical Service Provider to develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an operation. In the second component, NRCS may also provide assistance to implement various recommended measures identified in the energy audit through the use of conservation practice standards offered through this initiative.
- **National Organic Initiative (NOI):** NRCS will assist producers with installation of conservation practices on agricultural operations related to organic production. Producers currently certified as organic, transitioning to organic, or National Organic Program exempt will have access to a broad set of conservation practices to assist in treating their resource concerns while fulfilling many of the requirements in an Organic System Plan.
- **Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative:** NRCS helps producers implement high tunnels that extend growing seasons for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner. High tunnel benefits include better plant and soil quality and fewer nutrients and pesticides in the environment.
- **Prairie Pothole Wetland and Grassland Retention:** NRCS will assist producers in 13 counties in Montana to implement conservation practices specifically targeted to encourage the retention of wetland and grasslands in the Prairie Pothole Region, improve wildlife habitat for migratory birds, improve water quality and quantity, improve grassland health, and reduce soil erosion and sedimentation. This initiative will be offered in Blaine, Cascade (north of the Missouri River), Chouteau, Daniels, Glacier, Hill, Lewis and Clark (east of the Divide and north of the Dearborn River), Liberty, Phillips, Pondera, Richland, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Teton, Toole and Valley counties.

EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to eligible participants to install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land. Conservation practices must be implemented to NRCS standards and specifications. In Montana, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers will receive a higher payment rate for eligible conservation practices applied.

Applicants that operate as an entity are required to have a DUNS number and have that number registered with SAM.gov prior to submitting their application for consideration.

For more information about EQIP, or other programs offered by NRCS, please contact your local USDA Service Center or visit www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).
